Hope and Healing

Series 1
Defeating despair

HOPE AND HEALING
Defeating Despair

Series 1

A set of thirteen
Christ Centered Bible
based discussion guides
and support material
for use in a
Twelve step Study Group

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Quotations and concepts from '**Conquering the Dragon Within : God's provision for assurance and victory in the end time**' are used with the permission of the author, Marvin Moore and Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho.

The Poem '***Please Hear What I'm Not Saying*** ' is used by permission of the author, Charles Finn (charles.c.finn@gmail.com; www.poetrybycharlescfinn.com/)

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INTRODUCTION

This set of study guides has been prepared to help people who are struggling with the inner battle between the 'flesh' and the 'spirit'. Those who despair of ever gaining the victory over the inner thoughts, motives and feelings that are clearly not Christ-like. Those who are ready to give up on God because of the ongoing struggle with character imperfections, hurts and habits.

Some of the concepts presented in these study guides are loosely based on the book, '**Conquering the Dragon Within : God's provision for assurance and victory in the end time**',written by the popular Adventist author, Marvin Moore. This is a book that we recommend to all who are seeking an understanding of spiritual healing and growth, character restoration and development. It addresses justification and sanctification which are essential in the process of growth in Christlikeness. In his Prologue, Moore includes a couple of statements from the writings of E.G. White, parts of which are quoted below:

> "Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. . . While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth." (The Great Controversy, p. 425)
>
> "Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ." (Ibid. p.623)

A meaningful relationship with Christ forms the basis for character restoration. Ellen White states, "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own." (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 69)

These study guides use a 12-Step Recovery format and are designed to be used in a group discussion setting. A suggested program format is provided in the appendix as well as other program support material. The developers of the 'Hope and Healing' program trust that, in these study guides, you will find hope and constructive help on your pathway to spiritual healing. God bless you as you find meaning in your relationship and walk with your Saviour.

Pr Leon N Powrie
for the Hope and Healing Team
Reedy Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church

Hope and Healing

DESPAIR

We have probably all experienced times when we have felt totally and utterly hopeless and helpless. We may even have, in self denunciation, blurted out the words, "I'm useless, I'm a failure, there's no hope for me!" The frustration generated by repeated failure can lead us to give up, throw in the towel and sink into a state of despair.

We have gritted our teeth and struggled with temptation. Sometimes we seem to get the victory only to find that, down the road, we relapse again. And so we whip ourselves a little harder, sink a little deeper into the quicksands of despair.

Factors Leading to Despair

D -	**Denial -**	Our inability or unwillingness to face the reality of life.
	Depression -	Our sense of inadequacy, hopelessness, despondency, and dejection.
	Doubt -	Our uncertainty, confusion, and questioning leads to skepticism, distrust and disbelief.
E -	**Expectations -**	0ur unrealistic or thwarted expectations lead us to doubt that we can ever succeed or achieve in life.
S -	**Sorrow -**	Grief and loss can lead to shattered dreams, discouragement and dismay.
	Sickness -	Any chronic or acute physical or mental illness or disability.
	Shame -	Our repeated failures and relapses result in a burden of guilt and shame.
P -	**Pain / Punishment -**	Whether physical, psychological or spiritual can lead to despair.
	Pressure -	of physical, mental, social, or economic distress and worries.
A -	**Anger -**	Uncontrolled - toward others or self.
	Abuse -	Whether by or of others or self.
	Addictions -	Chemical dependence, detrimental habits, and hangups.
I -	**Indecision -**	When our indecision is accompanied by anxiety, the task of making a choice can lock us in despair.
	Indifference -	Whether secular or religious, comes as a result of a loss of hope, skepticism, and learned helplessness - apathy.
	Idleness -	"In idleness there is a perpetual despair". (Thomas Carlyle)
R -	**Rejection -**	Loneliness and rejection cause feelings of being disconnected, sad, alone, not "good enough", or even depression or despair.

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A Bible Character Who Experienced Despair

Reading: Extract from 1 Samuel 1:1-18

There was a man named Elkanah who had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not. Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the LORD at the Tabernacle.

On the days Elkanah presented his sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to Peninnah and each of her children. And because he loved Hannah, he would give her a choice portion because the LORD had given her no children.

So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the LORD had kept her from having children. Year after year it was the same—Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle. Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even eat.

"Why are you crying, Hannah?" Elkanah would ask. "Why aren't you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me—isn't that better than having ten sons?"

Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle. Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. And she made this vow:

"O LORD, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the LORD, his hair will never be cut."

As she was praying to the LORD, Eli watched her. Seeing her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking. "Must you come here drunk?" he demanded. "Throw away your wine!"

"Oh no, sir!" she replied. "I haven't been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD. Don't think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow."

"In that case," Eli said, "go in peace! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him." "Oh, thank you, sir!" she exclaimed. Then she went back and began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.

Discussion Questions:

1. What factors contributed to Hannah's despair?
2. How did her despair affect her relationships to her husband and the other wife?
3. Who tried to help her? Who was the most helpful?

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4. How does Hannah's problems resonate with your own problems?
5. What lessons can we draw from this story that help us deal with despair?

Helpful Hints for Coping with Despair

D -	**Deal with denial -**	We admit to the nature of our problem.
	Daily Devotions -	We keep in contact with our creator and a support person.
	Decide -	Choice is an act of the will - we decide to accept the outcomes of our past choices.
E -	**Encouragement -**	We accept the encouragement of others and are ready to offer encouragement to those travelling the same path.
S -	**Selfless service -**	We find true meaning in serving others rather than self.
P -	**Pray -**	" . . . pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (Jam. 5:16)
A -	**Ask for help -**	We seek help from the Lord. He said, "Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt.11:28)
I -	**Identify -**	We seek the reason(s) for our despair so that, where possible, we can address it (them).
R -	**Reassurance -**	We accept Jesus reassurance when He said, ""I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Heb.13:5)

1. Discuss ways you have found that help you cope with despair.
2. Compare the acrostic above with the Twelve Steps on the next page and discover how the Twelve Steps can really help us Deal with despair.
3. Reflect on the following statement.

   "He who knows the depths of the world's misery and despair, knows by what means to bring relief. He sees on every hand souls in darkness, bowed down with sin and sorrow and pain. But He sees also their possibilities; He sees the height to which they may attain. Although human beings have abused their mercies, wasted their talents, and lost the dignity of godlike manhood, the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption."

   (EGW, Education, p.270)

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The Twelve Steps.

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with like problems and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Note: These Twelve Steps are a minimal modification of the Bible based Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that are used by many other self-help groups in achieving recovery from specific self destructive behaviours.

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Hope and Healing

SO OUR LIVES ARE UNMANAGEABLE

The first of the 12 steps says:

> **"We admitted we were powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours, that our lives had become unmanageable."**

Let's read the words of Paul, the Christian author, as he struggles with his human condition. Let us see how well we relate to his experience as we follow his agonizing words.

> "The trouble with me is I am all too human, a slave to sin.
>
> "I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.
>
> "But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.
>
> "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.
>
> "I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.
>
> "But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.
>
> "I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.
>
> "I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.
>
> "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" (Rom. 7:14 LP modified and then to verse 24)

Discussion Questions:

1. How do we relate to Paul's assessment of where he is coming from? What is his starting point?
2. Where does the battle lie?
3. Is Paul just expressing a spiritual version of Murphy's Law when he says, "I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong."?
4. Have we ever come to the same conclusion that Paul had come to when he stated, "what a miserable person I am"?
5. Discuss aspects of Paul's experience that demonstrate that he had acknowledged his powerlessness and inability to manage his life.

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Some Factors That May Contribute to an Unmanageable Life

U -	Unworthiness-	Loss of self-esteem and self-worth can be a product of our own thoughts and/or external influences or factors or a combination
N -	Negativity -	A negative attitude comes from negative beliefs. For example, the more we complain, the more things we will find to complain about. It's impossible to complain and be happy at the same time.
M -	Moodiness -	We all have emotions, but when grouchiness takes over, we risk being someone others don't want to be around. Anxiety, sleep deprivation, hormonal influences and a number of medical and psychological conditions can affect our mood.
A -	Anger -	Carrying feelings of resentment and anger disrupt the harmony of life. Uncontrolled anger toward others or self can rise from unfulfilled expectations and/or responses to rules.
N -	Neglect -	Failure to care or take responsibility for self, others or our personal space. Our mental or physical state of being, our social circumstances or spiritual condition have an effect on our physical and cognitive abilities, energy levels, attention, organizational skills or motivation.
A -	Addiction -	A recurring compulsion to take, use, or act in ways that bring immediate gratification because of a physiological or psychological dependence on a substance, habit or behaviour despite the harmful consequences of the practice.
G -	Gambling -	An impulse disorder in which there is a strong impulse to gamble. This behaviour interferes with one's personal life and can lead to lying, deception, relationship breakdowns, loss of money and assets, criminal behaviour and self harm.
E -	Economic stress -	Economic stress, whatever the cause, tests our coping capacity. Failure to effectively manage our economic situation can lead to failure in relationships and an individual's sense of well-being.
A -	Acting -	Putting on a façade, acting as if all is well when it is not may seem like a safer option than revealing the truth. However, hiding behind a mask may turn out to be a bigger burden than one could ever imagine at the start and the longer things are left unsaid the less likely one is able to maintain any semblance of inner peace.
B -	Babbling -	Meaningless or foolish talk or chatter, particularly when under the influence of alcohol, can result in conflict and personal tragedy. (Prov.23:21,29) Jesus said, "*let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'* " (Matt. 5:37)
L -	Lying -	Lying begets distrust; distrust begets alienation; alienation begets rejection; rejection begets isolation, loneliness, hopelessness and despair.
E -	Egotism -	An inflated sense of one's own importance; the practice of talking about oneself too much; pride and conceit. Solomon said, '*Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.*' (Prov.16:18)

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Consider this poem by Charles C. Finn and reflect on what he is saying.

Please Hear What I'm Not Saying

Don't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the face I wear
For I wear a mask, a thousand masks,
Masks that I'm afraid to take off
And none of them is me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature with me,
but don't be fooled,
for God's sake, don't be fooled.
I give you the impression that I'm secure,
that all is sunny and unruffled with me,
within as well as without,
that confidence is my name and coolness my game,
that the water's calm and I'm in command
and that I need no one,
but don't believe me.

My surface may seem smooth but
my surface is my mask,
ever-varying and ever-concealing.
Beneath lies no complacence.
Beneath lies confusion, and fear, and aloneness.
But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it.
I panic at the thought of my weakness exposed.
That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind,
a nonchalant sophisticated facade,
to help me pretend,
to shield me from the glance that knows.

But such a glance is precisely my salvation,
my only hope, and I know it.
That is, if it's followed by acceptance,
If it's followed by love.
It's the only thing that can liberate me from myself
from my own self-built prison walls
from the barriers I so painstakingly erect.
It's the only thing that will assure me
of what I can't assure myself,
that I'm really worth something.
But I don't tell you this. I don't dare to. I'm afraid to.
I'm afraid your glance will not be followed by acceptance,
will not be followed by love.
I'm afraid you'll think less of me,
that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me.
I'm afraid that deep-down I'm nothing
and that you will see this and reject me

So I play my game, my desperate pretending game,
With a facade of assurance without
And a trembling child within.
So begins the glittering but empty parade of Masks,
And my life becomes a front.
I tell you everything that's really nothing,
and nothing of what's everything,
of what's crying within me.
So when I'm going through my routine
do not be fooled by what I'm saying.
Please listen carefully
and try to hear what I'm not saying,
what I'd like to be able to say,
what for survival I need to say,
but what I can't say.

I don't like hiding.
I don't like playing superficial phony games.
I want to stop playing them.
I want to be genuine and spontaneous and me
but you've got to help me.
You've got to hold out your hand
even when that's the last thing I seem to want.
Only you can wipe away from my eyes
the blank stare of the breathing dead.
Only you can call me into aliveness.
Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging,
each time you try to understand because you really care,
my heart begins to grow wings --
very small wings,
very feeble wings,
but wings!

With your power to touch me into feeling
you can breathe life into me.
I want you to know that.
I want you to know how important you are to me,
how you can be a creator--an honest-to-God creator --
of the person that is me
if you choose to.
You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble,
you alone can remove my mask,
you alone can release me from my shadow-world of panic,
from my lonely prison,
if you choose to.
Please choose to.

Do not pass me by.
It will not be easy for you.
A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.
The nearer you approach to me
the blinder I may strike back.
It's irrational, but despite what the books say about man
often I am irrational.
I fight against the very thing I cry out for.
But I am told that love is stronger than strong walls
and in this lies my hope.
Please try to beat down those walls
with firm hands but with gentle hands
for a child is very sensitive.

Who am I, you may wonder?
I am someone you know very well.
For I am every man you meet
and I am every woman you meet.

http://www.poetrybycharlescfinn.com

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Activity - 5 minutes:

Form small groups of 2-3 and discuss how you relate to the poem.

In Conclusion:

"For some of us it's been a perpetual hell for years. We put up a good front. We keep the masks on our faces. Maybe we front up to church every week smiling and telling everyone how wonderful it is to be a Christian. We may even bury the past down in the basement of our psyches for a while. But one day the temptation becomes too overwhelming, and we're down in hell again.

"The world mustn't know, though, least of all, the church! There's an image to maintain, a reputation to protect. We may even go back to church with the familiar smile pasted on our faces and pretending that everything is OK.

"Some of us may have been more honest. When it didn't work, we took off the mask. We gave up trying, pretending and even quit God. It's not that we wanted it that way but quitting was just easier, and far less frustrating, than trying and failing time after time."

(Extracted and paraphrased from Marvin Moore, Conquering the Dragon Within, p.16-17)

Many of us may find that we are powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions, and compulsive behaviours and we find that, like Paul, we cry out, "*Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?*" (Rom.7:24)

But Paul didn't stop there. He found the solution to his unmanageable life problem.

Paul's Solution to His Unmanageable Life

1. **The problem:** **"***So you see how it is: In* ***my mind*** *I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful* ***nature*** *I am a slave to sin."* (Rom. 7:25 LP)

2. **Paul's Simple Solution:**

   a. "*Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom.7:25 FP)

   b. "*Letting the Spirit [of God] control* ***your mind*** *leads to life and peace.*" (8:6)

   c. "***Let this mind be in you*** *which was also in Christ Jesus . . .*" (Phil.2:5)

   d. "*You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the* ***Spirit of God living in you****. . . And* ***Christ lives within you****, . . . the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God.*" (Rom.8:9-10 *Emphasis supplied*)

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CAME TO BELIEVE

The second of the 12 steps says:

> **Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

There are two action or verbal phrases in this statement. They are -

1. **CAME TO BELIEVE** - the title for today's topic
2. **COULD RESTORE** - that is what we are seeking in this group; we are seeking restoration.

There are two questions that arise from these two verbal phrases.

1. **What needs restoration?**
2. **What should I come to believe?**

In our previous topic, we acknowledged that our lives had become unmanageable, that things were out of control - that's what unmanageable means. Like Paul we cry out in despair, "What a miserable person I am. I'm a slave to the hurts, habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours that have troubled and controlled me." But we also learnt that Paul had found the answer to his mental anguish. Let us review his simple solution:-

a. '*Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.'* (Rom.7:25FP)

b. '*Letting the Spirit [of God] control your mind leads to life and peace*' (8:6)

c. '*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus . . .*' (Phil.2:5)

d. '*You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. . . And Christ lives within you, . . . the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God.*' (Rom.8:9-10)

Let's add two more profound statements from Paul that reinforce what we have already learnt from him.

e. '*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*' (Rom.12:2)

f. '*For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.*' (Phil. 2:13)

From these verses, we see that what needs restoring is our mind. We need a sound mind: that is, our sanity. That answers the first question but it also answers the second question too because Paul acknowledges that the only solution to our crazy thinking is to accept that a power greater than ourselves, that is our Creator and Saviour Jesus Christ, can give us a mental make-over. And the fact that we are here in this group today is evidence that His power is already working in us. He is just waiting for us to -

"LET GO" AND "LET GOD"

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Getting to Know the Power Greater Than Ourselves

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write the following message (Isaiah 53). Let's read it together.

1. Who has believed our message? **To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm**?
2. My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.
3. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!
4. But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.
5. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.
6. He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.
7. Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people.
8. He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.
9. But it was the **LORD's good plan** to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.
10. When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for **many to be counted righteous**, for he will bear all their sins.
11. I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the person who is being described in this chapter. Is he the powerful arm of the Lord? Discuss.
2. Discuss the reality of the statement, '**All of us, like sheep, have strayed away**'.
3. Discuss the **Lord's good plan** (V.9) as it is revealed in this chapter. What does it mean '**to be counted righteous**' or justified (V.10)?

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4. Does justified mean '**just if I'd** never sinned'?
5. Discuss the following statement based on Isaiah 53.

> 'Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed."' (EGW, **the Desire of Ages**', p.25)

On Being Justified

J -	**Judged righteous**	Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. (Rom. 3:24)
U -	**Undeserved kindness**	But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Rom. 5:8)
S -	**Saved by grace**	God's love saves us from our foolish ways through Jesus, our Saviour. (see Titus 3:3-7) God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. (Eph.2:8)
T -	**Transformed**	Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think (Rom. 12:2)
I -	**Inspired**	But there is a spirit within people, the breath of the Almighty within them, that makes them intelligent. (Job 32:8)
F -	**Freed**	So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. (John 8:36)
I -	**Instruments of righteousness**	So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. (Rom.6:13)
E -	**Empowered to be God's children**	But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right (power) to become children of God. (John 1:12)
D -	**Dead to sin**	So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. (Rom. 6:11)

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Further Discussion:

1. Consider each of the scripture references in the acrostic on the previous page. Do they give us reason to believe that Christ is that 'Greater Power' who is able to restore us to sanity?
2. Reflect on the following statements:
   a. "He [Christ] lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. ***Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned***." (EGW, **STEPS TO CHRIST**' p.62)
   b. "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt (sin)." (Ps. 32:1-2FP; Rom.4:7-8)
   c. "Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!" (Rom.11:33)
   d. **Justification** means two things:
      i. **Forgiveness**
      ii. **Declared (or accounted) righteous**
   e. "It's important to understand that justification means to declare righteous in spite of the evidence of wrongdoing . . ."
      (Conquering the Dragon Within, p.22)

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Hope and Healing

CALMING THE STORM

The Power Greater Than Ourselves:

In our last lesson, we were learning about the one who declares us righteous (justified) when we know we're not. We will continue to learn about the one who has the power to calm the storms of life and the undeserved kindness (grace) and authority to lift us above the storm to a platform of safety. We will begin by reviewing two Bible storms that give us a greater understanding of '**the power**' who is greater than ourselves.

Storm 1 (Compiled from Luke 8:22-25 and Mark 4:35-41)

One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake." So they took Jesus in the boat and started out.

As they sailed across, Jesus settled down for a nap at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. But soon a fierce storm came down on the lake. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water.

The disciples realized that they were in real danger. They went to Jesus and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, **don't you care** that we're going to drown?"

When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the raging waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?"

The disciples were absolutely terrified and amazed. "Who is this man?" they asked each other. "When he gives a command, even the wind and waves obey him!"

Storm 2 (Compiled from Matt.14:22-33: Mark 6:45-51; John 6:16-21)

Immediately after feeding the 5,000, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home.

The disciples had rowed three or four miles and were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves.

Jesus saw that they were in serious trouble. About three o'clock in the morning He came toward them, walking on the water.

When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were all terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage! I am here!"

Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

"Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

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Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. The disciples were totally amazed, for **they still didn't understand** the significance of the miracle of the loaves. **Their hearts were too hard** to take it in.

Then the disciples worshipped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

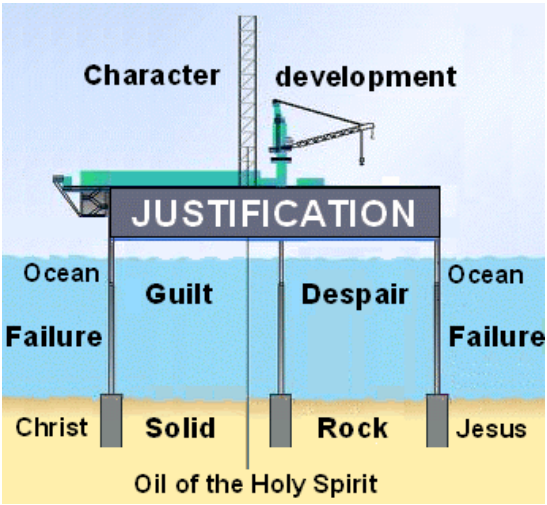
Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the types of storms that buffet our lives and the feelings we experience when in the middle of these storms.
2. The disciples said to Jesus, “don't you care . . .”. Like the disciples, do we ever feel that no one cares - that even God doesn’t care? Discuss this issue.
3. Explore Peter’s doubts and questions.
4. Why do we doubt? What was the basis of the disciple’s doubts? What is the basis of our own doubts? Discuss.
5. How do these stories confirm the statement Jesus made to His disciples , "I have been given all authority [*power* KJV] in heaven and on earth.” (Matt. 28:18)

The Oil-well Platform (a concept derived from **Conquering the Dragon Within**)

The illustration below helps us understand what justification means.

1. Jesus lifts us above the turbulent seas of failure, guilt and despair and places us on the secure platform of justification.
2. It’s purpose is to provide a protected platform on which work can be done.
3. It is founded on the solid Rock, Christ Jesus.
4. We will need to sink a well into the Rock and draw on the Holy Spirit to power our character development. (See Rom.8:6,9-10)
5. We need to remember that justification gives us a safe basis (that is support) for change. Without it, character transformation is not possible.
6. Without the platform of justification we would continue to wallow in the stormy waters of failure, guilt and despair.
7. With the assurance of justification, we can approach character development with confidence.



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Reasons why we can have calm confidence and assurance in the Power Greater than ourselves:

C -	**Creator**	"For by him [Christ] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him." (Col.1:16 NIV)
A -	**Authority**	Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth". (Matt. 28:18)
L -	**Lord**	The angels declared to the shepherds that "there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the **Lord**". (Luke 2:11 NKJV) When He returns, "He has on [His] robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS". (Rev. 19:16 NKJV)
M -	**Mediator**	"For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus." (1Tim.2:5)
I -	**Intercessor**	"Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading [interceding] for us." (Rom.8:34) Jesus, as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, "lives forever to intercede with God on [our] behalf." (Heb.7:22-25)
N -	**Near**	"But you are near, O LORD, and all your commands are true." (Ps.119:151) God "is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist." (Acts 17:27-28)
G -	**God**	"For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation." (2Cor.5:19)

Discussion Questions:

1. Let us consider how we relate to authority figures. In what ways do our preconceived ideas about authority cloud our concepts of God's power and authority.
2. From texts in the acrostic, who is doing the rescuing and why?
3. How do we respond to the idea that God is very near to us? Is this a problem or a comfort? Is our response to this question a reflection of our conceptions of God?
4. What emotions are aroused by the thought that, in and through Christ, God was 'no longer counting people's sins against them' but was 'reconciling the world to Himself'?

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What Justification Is and isn't

1. Justification doesn't make us perfect. It provides a platform, a place of security where character development can take place. Paul said, "I don't mean to say that I have already . . . reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me." (Phil.3:12)

   a. "***Christian character is not achieved in an instant***, but day after day we are to add to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. It is in the way that we are to be made ready for the coming of Christ. If we do not advance in the light, we shall be among that company who sit in darkness, for whom no place is found in heaven."
   (EGW, **Review & Herald**, April 21, 1891)

2. Being justified doesn't mean that we will never have a relapse. Justification takes care of us even if we have a relapse.

   a. ". . . if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1John 2:1)

   b. "Wrong habits are not overcome by a single effort. Only through long and severe struggle is self mastered." (EGW, **Conflict and Courage**, p.370)

   c. "We shall often fail in our efforts to copy the divine pattern."
   (EGW, **Selected Messages, Vol. 1,p**.337)

   d. "It is foolish not to anticipate relapses" (**The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey**, 26)

   e. Marvin Moore states, "You will make mistakes in the process of developing character. Some of those mistakes will be sins. God knew that mistakes and sins would happen on the platform [justification]. Let me assure you that He built it plenty strong enough to hold up through every mistake. . . Let me say it plainly: *God provided the oil-well platform - justification - to be a secure place where you and I can live while we make mistakes as we learn not to make mistakes.*" (**Conquering the Dragon Within**, p.32)

Conclusion:

"Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen." (Jude 1:24-25)

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COMING HOME

The Prodigal Son - (Luke 15:11-32)

A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.

About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs.

The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home, even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!

I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."

So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

His son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.”

But his father said to the servants, “Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet and kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.” So the party began.

Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on.

“Your brother is back,” he was told, “and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.”

The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, “All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!”

His father said to him, “Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'"

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The Path to Acceptance - Discuss the Questions.

A -	**Acknowledged**	King David was a murderer but in his Psalm of repentance he said, "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." (51:3 NKJV) **What did the prodigal acknowledge?**
C -	**Chose**	Life choices impact our future positively or negatively, sometimes with life or death consequences. **Consider two choices the prodigal son made, one with negative and one with positive consequences?**
C -	**Confessed**	In another psalm, David said, "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD" (32:5 NIV) Confess [your] trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. (James 5:16 NKJV) Associated with confession is repentance. Both John the Baptist and Jesus said, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matt 3:2;4:17 also see the next page) **What did the prodigal repent of and whom did he say he had wronged?**
E -	**Embraced**	**What prompted the prodigal's father to run and embrace his son?** God says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." (Jer.31:3 NKJV) The Lord's "compassions fail not". (Lam.3:22)
P -	**Pardoned**	"But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unfailing love." (Neh.9:17) **What are the evidences of true forgiveness and pardon for the prodigal?**
T -	**Turned**	"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." (Joel 2:12 NKJV; cf. Ezek.33:11) **What prompted the prodigal's return?**
E -	**Enrobed**	"I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness." (Isa.61:10) "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." (Ps.32:1 NIV)
D -	**Delivered**	"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations." (2Pet.2:9) "Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live." (Gal.1:4)

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Two Essentials for Justification

Remember - "Justification is the secure platform where we can live while we make mistakes as we learn not to make mistakes." (Cf. **Conquering the Dragon Within**, p.32)

First, we should understand that justification has been provided for all mankind. Note what Paul says in Romans 5:8

> "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was ***justification*** that brings life ***for all men.***"

This means that Jesus' death on the cross secures justification for every person who has ever lived. We all ***own*** justification. It's like a cheque for a sum of money. We have the cheque for justification but unless we 'cash it in', that is, meet the essential conditions that make it possible to ***possess*** justification, owning justification will be of no value. Here are the two essential conditions:-

1. **Faith (belief), the first essential condition** -What do the following texts say?
   a. "But to **all who believed him and accepted him**, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:29)
   b. "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that **everyone who believes** in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
   c. "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to **all who believe**." (Rom.3:22 NIV)
   d. "God saved you by his grace when **you believed**. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God." (Eph.2:8)

Note: **Came to believe** . . . . Is the second of the 12 steps that has been covered in lessons 3 and 4.

2. **Repentance, the second essential condition** -
   a. As already noted, John and Jesus both called people to repentance. But what is repentance? Note this definition.

      "Repentance includes **sorrow for sin** and a **turning away from it**." (EGW, **Steps to Christ**, p.23)

      Sorrow for sin is an **ATTITUDE**

      Turning away from sin is an **ACTION**

      i. **Discuss how the prodigal son demonstrated repentance by his ATTITUDE and ACTION**.

   b. "**When it is in the heart to obey God**, **when efforts are put forth to this end**, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and **He makes up for the deficiency** with His own divine merit." (EGW, **1 Selected Messages**, p.382)

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In the light of this statement, let's see how it applies to genuine repentance.

"When it is in the heart to obey God"

That's sorrow for sin **ATTITUDE**

"When efforts are put forth to this end"

That's turning away from sin **ACTION**

When these two essentials are present, Jesus accepts our best effort and "makes up for the deficiency with His own merit."

Discussion:

1. In the light of what we have just studied, what does justification mean to us? Share your thoughts and feelings.
2. When the prodigal son's father put the best robe on him, did he instruct him to get cleaned up first? Check the reading out.
3. The third step to Hope and Healing states:

   "Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

   To what extent has this lesson helped us to consider taking this step?.

Conclusion:

Justification is a platform on which we live. As long as we stay on the platform, we have a relationship with Jesus, and we are assured of salvation. In the process of character development, we will make mistakes. God knows that. He built the platform for the purpose of giving us a foundation on which to develop character, including the mistakes we will make in the process. ***The platform was built to give Christians a secure place on which to live while making mistakes as they learn not to make mistakes.***

> "If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and **you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."** (EGW, **Steps to Christ**, p.62)

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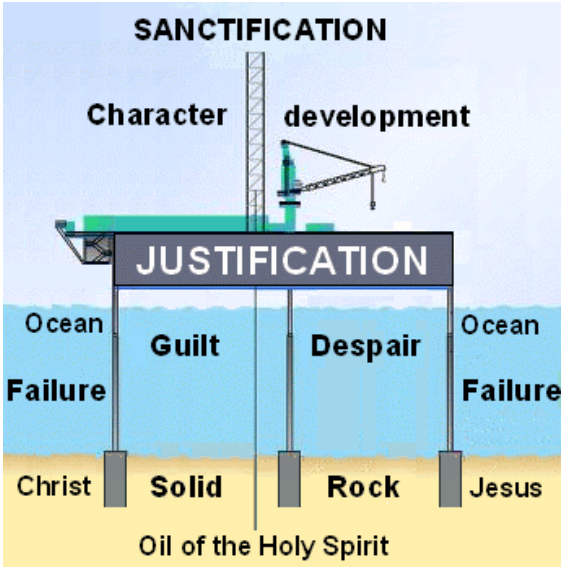
The Journey So Far

1. In the first 5 lessons, we have found that the only way out of the turmoil of failure guilt and despair is to get on the safe and certain platform of **JUSTIFICATION**. Last lesson we learnt that to get on the platform we need to have faith in God, our higher power as well as a willingness to repent. We remember that repentance includes two things:
   a. **Sorrow for sin** - that is our **ATTITUDE**
   b. **Turning away from sin** - that is our **ACTION**
2. We recall that the platform of **JUSTIFICATION** is founded on the solid rock, Christ Jesus and that through Him and from Him we can source the Holy Spirit.
3. We also learnt that "*God provided the oil-well platform - justification - to be a secure place where you and I can live while we make mistakes as we learn not to make mistakes*". (**Conquering the Dragon Within**, p.32)

Now

Take a look at the diagram of the oil-well platform below and you will notice that at the top the word **SANCTIFICATION** has been added. Sanctification is what happens during character development. Without the safe support of justification, sanctification cannot occur. We will look at sanctification in greater detail in a later lesson but for now it is sufficient to know that it is a refining process.



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Jeremiah said, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard it’s spots” (13:23). We know how difficult it is to change our character by ourselves, we’ve tried and failed many times. Like Paul, we despair at our repeated lapses but also have come to believe that there is a higher power who has the answer and ,”*The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord*”. (Rom.7:25). That’s what the second step to Hope and Healing is all about.

The third step follows and says:-

> “**Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him**.”

This is a step that we need to take if we are going to achieve any character development (sanctification). But handing control of our lives over to another is not an easy decision. Such a decision requires trust in and the assurance of the individual’s ability.

Without strength - (Romans 5:6-11; 6:1-7)

“When **we were utterly helpless**, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

“**But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.** And since we have been made right (justified) in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.

“For since our **friendship with God was restored** by the death of his Son **while we were still his enemies,** we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now **we can rejoice** in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord **Jesus Christ has made us friends of God**.

“Well then, **should we keep on sinning** so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?

“Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, **we joined him in his death**? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

“Since **we have been united with him in his death**, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.

“For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.”

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Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean when, in the first line Paul says,"we were utterly helpless"? Why are we utterly helpless (powerless)?
2. Discuss our status when we are made right (justified) in God's sight.
3. What does it mean to you that "Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."
4. Discuss Paul's response to the question, "Should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace?"
5. What does it mean to die to sin? How does this relate to the statements " we joined him in his death" and "we have been united with him in his death"
6. Discuss how you feel knowing that you can be "set free from the power of sin."

Let's learn what letting go will do for us:

L -	**Liberated**	"*So Christ has truly set us free."* (Gal.5:1) "*So if the Son* (Jesus) *sets you free, you are truly free*." (John.8:36) Jesus said, "*And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*." (V.32). He also said, "*I am . . . the truth . . .*(14:6)
E -	**Empowered**	"*Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think*." (Eph.3:20) "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*". (Phil.4:13 NKJV)
T -	**Transformed**	"*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord*." (2Cor.3:18 NKJV)

G -	**Growth**	"*May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, God has given us every-thing we need for living a godly life*". . . . Add to your faith virtue, then knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. "*The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*." (2Pet.1:2-3,5-8)
O -	**Overcome**	"*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith*." (1John 5:4)

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1. Do the texts in this lesson's acrostic give us reason to believe that we can safely let go and let God? Which text gives you the most assurance?
2. Discuss the progressive nature of change and growth. What areas do we acknowledge need changing?
3. Discuss the importance of belief in a higher power (who we chose to call God) in being freed, transformed and victorious.

Reflection:

Consider the following statement of E.G. White:-

> "To go forward without stumbling, we must have the assurance that a hand all-powerful will hold us up, and an infinite pity be exercised toward us if we fall. God alone can at all times hear our cry for help." (**Sons and Daughters of God**, p.154)

1. What does it mean to go forward without stumbling?
2. We must have the assurance of two things -
   a. A **hand all-powerful** to hold us up - Reflect on this and discuss its relationship to what we have covered in this lesson.
   b. An **infinite pity** that won't abandon us if we fall. **Justification** is the assurance of infinite pity that we need when we stumble (make mistakes, sin) when we're trying not to stumble (make mistakes, sin). Discuss this concept.
3. God is ready at all times to hear our cry for help. Are we ready to let him help? Are we ready to -

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Hope and Healing

CAN GOD FORGIVE ME?

Michael Jackson used to sing a song entitled 'I'm bad". Do we sing the same song about ourselves? Have we ever contemplated the thought, "God couldn't forgive me, I have failed so often, I think I've committed the unpardonable sin." In our despair have we said, "What's the use of trying, I give up."? Sometimes we **give up** on ourselves rather than **letting go** of the problem and **letting God** do what He is best able to do. While ever there is a sense of guilt and shame and a longing to escape the roundabout of repeated failures, there is assurance that God can deal with it and provide the resources we need for character development. This involves repentance or sorrow for the wrong behaviour and the desire and effort to change.

Consider the following first person paraphrase of a quote from the little book, "Steps to Christ", p.47 (EGW). Note the bracketed italicized comments.

> We may ask, "How are we to surrender ourselves to God?" We desire to give ourselves to Him, but we are **weak in moral power**, **in slavery** to doubt, and **controlled by the habits of our lives of sin**. (*That's addiction: when we're out of control*) **Our promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand**. (*That's addiction: Our promises are quickly broken)* We **cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections**. (*That's addiction: We cannot say No to our habits and passions)* The knowledge of **our broken promises** and **forfeited pledges** weakens our confidence in our own sincerity, and **causes us to feel that God cannot accept us** . . . (*That's the despair or 'Rock-bottom' of addiction*).

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to be weak in moral power and a slave of our sinful habits and doubts? Does a slave have any choice?
2. Respond to this statement from Marvin Moore's book, '**Conquering the Dragon Within**', p.66.

   > A slave has no choice. A slave can't *"just say No."* It's for this very kind of person that Jesus makes up the deficiency--the person who has it in his heart to obey God and is putting forth efforts to obey God, but is not yet *able* to obey God."

3. Share the '**ropes of sand**' you have tried to hold on to and the consequences.
4. Discuss the following quote from John 8:31-34,36 and what it says about how we can be emancipated from our slavery to ingrained habits and sins?

   > "Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." . . . they said. "We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, 'You will be set free'?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. . . So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free."

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Note: The quote from 'Steps to Christ' stated on the first page of this lesson is incomplete. It actually ends with the words, "**but we need not despair.**"

Meet Our Forgiving God

F -	Forgets our sins	To those who are committed to a 'covenant relationship' with God, He says, "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." (Jer.31:34)
O -	Open access is ours	God has an open door policy. Jesus says, "I have opened a door for you that no one can close" (Rev.3:8). As Paul explains it, "we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place." (Heb.10:19-20)
R -	Restores us	"When he [the sinner] prays to God, he will be accepted. And God will receive him with joy and restore him to good standing." (Job 33:26) "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2Cor.5:17)
G -	Grants us forgiveness	"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." (1Jhn.1:9)
I -	Immunizes us	In the Lord's prayer, we pray, "And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." (Mat.6:13) Paul states, "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." (1 Cor. 10:13) (e.g. Hope and Healing)
V -	Values us	"So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows." (Matt.10:31) ""For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (Jhn.3:16)
E -	Enables us	"Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault." (Jude 24)

M -	Mercy	"Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously." (Isa.55:7)
E -	Endless love	God says, "I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself." (Jer.31:3)

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There are several important points that we can draw from this lesson's acrostic. As we discuss each point let us share our thoughts and possibly our experience.

1. God's love for us is boundless.
2. We are all valued by God. "The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants **everyone** to repent." (2Pet.3:9)
3. Our part is to believe in Him, to confess and repent (i.e. turn from 'the very thought of doing wrong'), and to turn to Him for His mercy and generous forgiveness.
4. Christ's death and resurrection has given us direct access to the throne of God.
5. He enables us to withstand and escape from temptation because He is able. "Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested." (Heb. 2:18)

Let's read the 4th step together

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Making a moral inventory of our weaknesses and strengths will help us know what we need to seek forgiveness for and those areas we need divine help for so as to attain the character development (sanctification) we long for.

Jeremiah says, "Let us test and examine our ways" (Lam.3:4), and David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts." (Ps.139:23) It is important for us to understand that to do a fearless moral inventory of ourselves we need to search our hearts and honestly evaluate our attitudes, motives, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours because, as Jesus clearly declares, "[we] are defiled by the words that come out of [our] mouth(s)." (Matt.15:11) He goes on to say, "But the words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you." (Vs.18-20) Let's look at and discuss some of the things we may currently need to search our heart (mind) for that can actually defile us and lead us to utter words and perform actions that we may later regret.

1. **Deceit** - "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives." (Jer.17:9-10)
2. **Denial** - This can include minimizing, blaming, excusing, generalizing, dodging (avoiding), attacking.
3. **Resentment, Envy and Anger** -James says, "But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying . . .For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind." (James 3:14,16)

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4. **Pride and arrogance** - Are these roadblocks to an honest and thorough moral inventory? John says, “For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world.” (1John 2:16)

5. **Anxieties and fears** - We need to discover the basis for our fears. John declares, “God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. . . . Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.” (1John 4:16,18)

Reflect on the following statement

“[Many] think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour?

“The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.

“Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts.” (EGW, **Steps to Christ**, p.26)

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LET'S BE HONEST

In our last lesson, we discussed making a moral inventory. We learnt that this entailed an evaluation of our weaknesses and strengths. These are reflected in our attitudes, motives, perceptions, and beliefs - the root of our behaviours. In doing a moral inventory we are able to step out from behind our mask and get honest with ourselves. Unless we do this we will not be able to progress on to character development (sanctification).

We have admitted we are powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions, and compulsive behaviours, and have come to believe that we need to turn our lives over to God who has the power to restore us to sanity. Now we come to the place where we get honest with God, ourselves and with those around us. This is what step 5 is all about.

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

This step can be a stumbling block to many of us so let us unpack what it means. First of all, it isn't a confessional. It means that we acknowledge to God what He already knows about our weaknesses and that we are ready to share our moral inventory with another trusted person. Remember our moral inventory deals with who we are, our attitudes, motives, perspectives and beliefs, rather than what we have done as a consequence of who we are. Note how King David expresses the sentiments of Step 5 in Psalm 139:1-4,11-13,16-18,23-24.

> "O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.
>
> "You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.
>
> "I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.
>
> "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.
>
> "How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!
>
> "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

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Discussion:

1. Who is it the hardest to admit our weaknesses (character flaws) to? Why?
2. David said that there was nowhere to hide from God. Who are we trying to hide from? Who are we trying to fool? Could it be ourselves?
3. What bearing does first admitting our character defects to ourselves have on being prepared to admit them to another human being?
4. Where can we find the wisdom to understand ourselves? Discuss the following statement from Psalm 119:130.

   "The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand." (cf. Vs. 34,73,125,144,169)

Being Honest With Ourselves:

The following statement was written for ministers of religion. Read it carefully and notice particularly the sections in bold type.

"If [God's people] would make the actions of each day a subject of careful thought and deliberate review, with the object to **become acquainted with their own habits of life**, they would better know themselves.

"By a close scrutiny of their daily life under all circumstances **they would know their own motives**, **the principles which actuate them**.

"This daily review of our acts, to see whether conscience approves or condemns, **is necessary for** all who wish to arrive at **the perfection of Christian character**.

"Many acts which pass for good works, even deeds of benevolence, will, when closely investigated, **be found to be prompted by wrong motives**.

"Many receive applause for virtues which they do not possess. The Searcher of hearts **inspects motives**, and often the deeds which are highly applauded by men are recorded by Him as **springing from selfish motives** and **base hypocrisy**.

"**Every act** of our lives, whether excellent and praiseworthy or deserving of censure, **is judged** by the Searcher of hearts **according to the motives which prompted it.**" (EGW, **2Testimonies**, p.512)

Discussion:

1. Discuss the major theme of this statement.
2. How frequently should we review our life habits and motives?
3. How thorough should this revision be?
4. What is the goal or object of such an exercise?
5. When the 'Searcher of hearts' examines our lives, what criterion is used to evaluate our actions?

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Some areas that we may need to honestly appraise

H -	Habits, compulsions and addictions	We need to look deeper than our behaviour and seek to ascertain what attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, desires or motives are feeding the behaviours, habits, compulsions, addictions, obsessions and negative thinking that are damaging our lives. What are the reasons or excuses or blame we use to rationalize our behaviour? Let's get honest; who are we fooling?
O -	Obsessions	
N -	Negative thinking	
E -	Emotional status	Do we carry emotional scars, or even deep emotional wounds? Is our emotional sensitivity the result of hanging on to past hurts, as real as they may have been or still are? Do we have a persecution complex, or a 'poor me' syndrome? Could we be craving sympathy?
S -	Self-centeredness	"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." (Phil.2:3-4) "Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us." (Rom. 12:3)
T -	Tendencies and temptations	"And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. " (Jam.1:13-14)

TALKING ABOUT OUR PROBLEMS (CHARACTER DEFECTS) WILL HELP US TO UNDERSTAND THEM

Talking about our defects will probably seem hard to us at first, but we can be assured that it is perfectly appropriate. James said, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16, KJV). The Greek word translated "faults" means more of a stumbling or a false step. Our faults may include defects such as inappropriate fear, shame, and anger that cause us to do sinful things, but that are not in themselves sinful. There's something liberating about looking at our feelings and attitudes and honestly admitting to them. Fear goes away. There's another name for honesty in the recovery sense. It's called:

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Repentance

You and I must have God's help to repent. We cannot make this change in our [faulty] understanding on our own. We can understand that we have cheated and lusted without God's help, but we cannot understand the evil of these behaviours and the attitudes behind them without His help. The Holy Spirit must convict each of us, telling us the things that are wrong about our lives and encouraging us to live the right way. Repentance means that we say, "God, You're right."

That's honesty

[We] must experience this change in our sinful understanding before God can begin changing us to be like Jesus on the inside. That's why a change in our [faulty] understanding heads the list of changes we must experience in order to gain the victory over temptation and sin. To put it another way, a change in our [faulty] understanding is the foundation of sanctification.

TO GAIN THE VICTORY, WE MUST GET HONEST WITH OURSELVES AND WITH GOD

(Paraphrased extracts and concepts from, **Conquering The Dragon Within**, p. 137,165)

Form Small Groups of Two or Three:

1. Review each section in the acrostic and share with those in your group which areas you may be having difficulty with.
2. Discuss how talking about your character defects helps your understanding of them better.

Choosing a Sponsor:

It is very important that the person we share our character defects with be a trusted person. Below are some suggestions for choosing a person who we can call our sponsor.

Choose -

•A Christian you can trust.

•A person who has been in a 12 step recovery program.

•Someone who will accept you.

•Someone who will listen without giving advice.

•Someone of the same gender.

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SURRENDER

There is a hymn that says, "All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give . . . I surrender all . . ." (J. W. Van Deventer). In previous lessons, we have learnt that God can correct our character defects if we put our trust in Him. We have learnt to identify these defects by fearlessly doing a moral inventory. The next step is to ask God to remove our defects.

Let's read together steps 6 and 7of the 12 steps to Hope and Healing again.

Step 6: **Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

Step 7: **Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**

There are several factors inherent in these Steps that must come together in synergy so that we can fully surrender (i.e. let go) and God can act (i.e. let God) to change our character defects into assets and "restore us to sanity" (Step 2). These factors are:-

1. **Acceptance and trust** of God and His power, authority and love for us. This is not just an intellectual act of recognition but a relational experience. It is an experience of the heart.
2. **Entirely** - that is complete, all encompassing, no restrictions, an all or nothing willingness for God to do whatever He needs to do to "restore us to sanity."
3. **Readiness** - unreserved willingness to surrender our "will and our lives . . . to the care of God." (step 3)
4. **Humility** -"God blesses those who are humble" (Matt.5:5). "[God] leads the humble in doing right, teaching them His way" (Ps.25:9)
5. **Action** - Jesus says, "**ask** and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will find; **knock**, and it will be opened to you." (Matt. 7:7) We have to act. Let's look at it this way. To ask is to pray to God; to seek is to study God's Word and inspired support literature; to knock is to enter into fellowship with other askers and seekers.

The interactive presence of these five factors is essential for steps 6 and 7 to work.

Discussion points:

1. How do these five points work together to make steps 6 and 7 work for us?
2. What can go wrong when taking these two steps? Wouldn't it be easier if we were to skip step 6? Consider the implications.
3. Discuss what it means to be entirely ready.
4. What is our part in the process of character development, or restoration of sanity?
5. Where do we stand in this process?

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Bible Reading - (Jer. 18:1-6; Isa.64:8)

"The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, "Go down to the potter's shop, and I will speak to you there."

"So I did as he told me and found the potter working at his wheel.

"But the jar he was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so he crushed it into a lump of clay again and started over.

"Then the LORD gave me this message: "O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand.

"But now, O LORD, You [are] our Father; We [are] the clay, and You our potter; And all we [are] the work of Your hand.

Consider the following statements that reflect on the scriptures we have just read:

"In [the Bible] God compares Himself to a potter and His people to the clay. His work is to mold and fashion them after His own [likeness]. The lesson they are to learn is the lesson of **submission**. Self is not to be made prominent. If due attention is given to the divine instruction, if self is **surrendered** to the divine will, the hand of the Potter will produce a shapely vessel."

EGW, **In Heavenly Places**, p.28

"Your only course is to give yourself **unreservedly** into the hands of Jesus - all your experiences, all your temptations, all your trials, all your impulses - and let the Lord mold you as clay is molded in the hands of the potter. You are not your own and therefore there is the necessity of giving your unmanageable self into the hands of One who is able to manage you. Then rest, precious rest and peace will come to your soul."

EGW, **Letters to Young Lovers**, p. 44

"God accepts those who **crucify self**, and makes them vessels unto honor. They are in His hands as clay in the hands of the potter, and He works His will through them. Such men and women receive spiritual power. Christ lives in them, and the power of His Spirit attends their efforts. They realize that they are to live in this world the life that Jesus lived--a life free from all selfishness . . . ."

EGW, **Daughters of God**, p.82

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Discussion:

1. If we are the clay, what does the potter have to do when our lives have become unmanageable? What does that entail?
2. How do the words in bold type in the three statements above reflect the phrase in the sixth step, “Entirely ready”?
3. How important is it for us to trust completely in the master potter’s ability to reshape us as He works to eliminate the defects in our character and “restore us to sanity”?

Restoration

Integral to our request for God to remove our character defects is the concept of restoring or rebuilding our character . In renovating a home many things need to be removed and replaced with new material so as to complete the restoration. It is imperative that we not only be entirely ready for the removal of our defects of character but that they are replaced with better traits of character.

Character development (sanctification) is what takes place on the platform of justification. It is on the platform of justification, like the solid wheel of a potter, that we are reshaped. For a potter to make a vessel of honor, he must remove anything that affects the smooth quality and even consistency of the clay. And so with us. We surrender ourselves to the master potter to work the clay of our lives until it is of a consistency that can be molded into His likeness - until His character can be reproduced in us.

Jesus illustrated the point well when He said that when our ‘house’ has been cleaned and emptied of the ‘demons’ that have plagued our lives, unless there is something to fill the void (the empty house), the same ‘demon’ will return, but not alone. The ‘demon’ will return with a team of demons to take over the emptiness and take up squatters’ rights in our lives, so creating a worse situation than before. (Matt.12:45)

Surrendering

This is not an enforced surrender; this is a willing surrender based on an appreciation of God’s grace and love for us. We are entirely ready with no restrictions or provisos to our submission. We see that our willingness to surrender is matched by His loving desire to see us restored. Paul puts it this way,”So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.” (2Cor.3:18) This is the process of sanctification, the work that God can do as we surrender daily to His work of removing our defects of character and developing in us character traits that match His character.

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The following acrostic outlines some of the many negative character traits that we may need to permit God to remove and replace with more positive qualities. Study them carefully. These are but a sample of the many negative traits that need to be changed into a positive trait or replaced altogether.

We Surrender and Humbly Ask

	To be Removed	To be Restored
S -	**S**hortcomings	**S**trengths
U -	**U**nrealistic expectations	**U**nfettered acceptance of reality
R -	**R**esentment	**R**eal forgiveness
R -	**R**ationalization - excuses	**R**esponsibility for our actions
E -	**E**gotism	**E**ver humble
N -	**N**egative thinking	**N**ew positive ways of thinking
D -	**D**ishonesty	**D**elight in honesty
E -	**E**nvy	**E**mpathy - generosity and admiration
R -	**R**igidity - (stubbornness)	**R**elaxed flexibility and willingness

For more character defects see:-
realisticrecovery.wordpress.com/2009/05/03/194-character-defects/http://www.angelfire.com/mi4/rws/step4.pdf

Open Discussion and Sharing

“Sometimes our addictions have such a powerful hold on us that we simply cannot bring ourselves to the point of surrendering them to God. If that's where you are right now, don't give up. Try giving Him your fear of losing the addiction instead. . . . Give [God] permission to remove your fear. The more He removes the fear, the less of a hindrance fear will be to surrendering . . . to God." (**Conquering the Dragon Within**, p.198)

> “When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted.” (Psalm 77:2 NIV)

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MAKING AMENDS

In our last lesson, we had an acrostic which suggested a number of positive character traits that could replace matching negative character traits. The fourth positive trait listed was 'Responsibility for our actions'. In this lesson, we will look at one aspect of doing just that. We will discuss what it means to take steps 8 and 9. These two steps address the question of making amends to those people who have been hurt by our character defects.

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Consider the following Bible story: (Luke 19:2-10)

There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich.

He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd.

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy.

But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham.

For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Discussion:

1. Explore the character defects of the people in this story.
2. Discuss the people to whom Zacchaeus stated he would make amends.
3. What prompted the change in this *notorious sinner's* attitude to people?
4. Discuss ways this story illustrates the place of Step 8 in recovery.
5. Jesus declared that Zacchaeus was a true son of Abraham. How does this provide assurance for us in our progress through the 12 steps to healing.

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Make a list:

In making a list of those we have harmed it is important that we address three areas in which we may have hurt others or ourselves:-

1. **Material wrongs** - those wrongs, whether as a result of actions or neglect, that have caused harm to another's economic, material or physical well-being.
2. **Moral wrongs** - when by our example, action or inaction we fail to uphold moral and ethical standards and so neglect the rights and needs of others and cause or condone moral harm to them.
3. **Spiritual wrongs** - they include spiritual abuse or neglect or acts of omission. Spiritual wrongs occur when we neglect the spiritual needs of others and self, when we fail to express gratitude and encouragement, and don't meet our obligations and commitments to community, family and self.

The sample table below gives us a useful format that we can use. Let's trial it for a few minutes by making a sample entry for each of the three areas above.

Person	Relation-ship	My Wrongdoing	Effects on others	Effects on me

Became Willing:

This is where we need Divine help. Only an appreciation of God's great love and willingness to reconcile us to Himself through Jesus can prepare us for the step of making amends. Let us contemplate the following verses of scripture as we seek to acquire the willingness to make amends to those we have wronged.

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"*Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.*" (1 John 4:11-12)

"*If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*" (Matt.6:14-15)

"*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*" (Rom.2:1 NIV)

A part of becoming willing is to look at our motives or reasons for confessing. Marvin Moore in '*Conquering the Dragon Within*' (p.222) suggests two motives that, if held, would suggest that confession is not appropriate.

a. When confession would actually be a way of causing harm or "getting even".

b. When our confession is only a means of getting rid of our guilt without considering whether the one confessed to will be benefited by our disclosure, then it is inappropriate to make amends.

We must remember that while we may be willing to make amends, it may not be in the best interest of the person or persons harmed or others who it may impact.

Discussion:

1.Which character traits do we need to modify so that we are better able to make amends for our wrong behaviour?

2. What essential qualities are needed when one seeks to make amends? Discuss how we can acquire them.

3.Discuss the question of motivation as it relates to making amends.

Make amends where possible:

"*So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift*." (Matt.5:23-24 ESV)

"We should confess every sin to God and, wherever possible, when our behaviour has harmed another person or their property, we should confess and make amends directly to that person. This is what **Step 9,** quoted earlier, states. It says, "Made *direct* amends to such people." That means we should make every effort to speak personally with the one whom we have injured and make restitution when needed. Where distance separates we may have to resort to phoning the injured person. If there are legal implications it is wise to seek the legal advice of a Christian lawyer. Under very special circumstances we may need the advice of a qualified Christian counsellor to determine whether the amends should be made anonymously through a third party or not."

(paraphrased from **Conquering the Dragon Within**, p.222)

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"*if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.* " (Ezek.33:15-16 ESV)

Discussion:

1. Discuss situations where it would be inappropriate to make amends.
2. How do we make amends when we have harmed ourselves?
3. What can we do when our emotions (fear, anger, resentment, shame etc.) get in the way?

In Summary:

M -	**Make a list of**	Material, moral and spiritual wrongs of commission or omission, neglect or abuse.
A -	**Accept responsibility**	Own our attitudes and motives, our actions or inactions without blaming or excusing.
D -	**Decide to make amends**	Compulsion is not a basis for confession. Genuine regret and sorrow for the wrong done makes for willingness to amend.
E -	**Examine our motive**	Is there an element of 'pay back'? Are we just wanting to assuage our own feelings?

A -	**Act directly**	Personal heartfelt confession and restitution can lead to more positive results
M -	**Make restitution**	When it is in our power to restore the loss or repair the damage, we should to the best of our ability.
E -	**Exceptions**	We should be sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of others. Avoid inflicting pain.
N -	**Never hurt**	Have a no harm policy - make amends only where to do so will facilitate healing.
D -	**Don't expect forgiveness**	We can be grateful if we are forgiven but the victim of our action may not be ready to forgive.
S -	**Stay positive**	Making amends may take time. We will need patience and perseverance.

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WALKING THE WALK

We have made 10 very big steps in climbing out of the depths of despair and hopelessness. We have taken hold of the hand of our Saviour who has made it possible for us to climb onto the secure platform of justification. We have challenged our fears and uncertainties and, by faith, surrendered our understanding, our desires and our will to God who alone is able to remove the defects of our characters and remake us after His likeness. We see this sanctifying process as a preparation for the ultimate make-over when, 'the *Lord Jesus Christ . . . will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.*' (Phil.3:20-21) Now we enter fully into that refining process as we walk the walk of faith.

Read the following quote, Bible verses and the 10th step.

"Sanctification of character is the work of a lifetime. It is a work of education that will result in a life molded and fashioned after the divine. Our lives are to be hewed, and squared, and polished until they reflect the likeness of Christ. "I sanctify myself," the Saviour declared, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." "Thy word is truth." (John.17:17,19) The word of God is to be the daily meat and drink of all who love and serve him. That word, received into the heart, will cleanse the life and sanctify the entire being." (EGW, **Review and Herald** July 8, 1909)

"*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*" (John 17:17 NIV)

"*Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*" " (John 14:6)

"*Jesus . . . said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."*

(John 8:12)

"*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*"

(1John 1:7 NKJV)

"*Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. . I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.*"

(John 6:35, 51)

"*I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.*"

(Phil. 3:12-14)

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Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Discussion:

1. We pray the prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread” or “Give us today the food we need.” (Matt.6:11) In light of the scriptures we have been reading, what are we actually praying for?
2. Discuss the importance of a regular, energy rich spiritual diet to sustain us in walking the walk.
3. What part does the Truth play in our character development (sanctification)?
4. Discuss other essential factors in reaching the goal of Christ-like character development. (cf. John 14:6; 8:12; 1:7)
5. Discuss Paul’s counsel regarding the past and future (Phil 3:12-14) and pressing on in walking the walk.

Walking in the Way

As we have read, Jesus said, “I am the way”. Early Christians were called ‘the Way’. We need to be aware, though, that there are two ways. Jesus made this observation, ‘*You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.*’ (Matt.7:13-14)

WHICH WAY WILL I CHOOSE?

‘*This is what the LORD says: "Stop at the crossroads and look around. . . Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left. . . .Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls. But you reply, 'No, that's not the road we want!'* (Jer. 6:16 with Isa.30:21 inserted).

The Broad Way **“the way of the ungodly” Ps.1:6**	**The Narrow Way** **“the way of the righteous” Ps.1:6**
Grumblers, complainers, lustful, boastful, manipulative, flatterers, scoffers, sensual, divisive, scornful, follow the ungodly [peer pressure], greedy, reject counsel; are proud, arrogant, and use corrupt and perverted speech. (Jude 1:16-19; Ps.1:1; Prov.1:1-19,30;)	Build faith, pray in the Spirit, live in God’s love and mercy, show compassion, rescue the perishing, accept and trust God’s guidance, maintain integrity, shun sin, obey His commands and seek His wisdom. (Jude 1:20-23; Ps.119:1; Prov.3:1-23)

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Time for Contemplation:

1. Which 'way' are we walking along, and where are we walking to?
2. What is meant by the 'godly way'?

Walking in the Light

As we have read, Jesus said, '*I am the light of the world* '. He also said, '*You are the light of the world.*' (Matt.5:14) Isaiah calls to us and says, '*come and let us walk In the light of the LORD.*' (Isa.2:5) Yes, once [we] '*were full of darkness, but now* [we] *have light from the Lord. So* [let us walk] *as people of light!*' (Eph.5:8 adapted)

The psalmist says, '*Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path*. (Ps.119:105). God's word is our light. That is, all of scripture. Isaiah says,'*Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark.*' (Isa.8:20) '*And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*' (2Pet.1:19 NIV)

'*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*' (1John 1:7 NKJV) Walking in the light means walking with Jesus and includes fellowshipping with others who are walking with Jesus in the light. Note also that this is the safe place, the platform of justification where Christ's precious blood covers and cleanses us and makes possible our character development (sanctification). '*The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day*.' (Prov.4:18)

Time for Reflection:

1. Consider the source of light.
2. Share together what the 'dawn' of your spiritual life was like and what experiencing 'the full light of day' will mean to you as it opens to you new areas for character development.

Walking in the Truth

Pilate asked Jesus, '*What is truth?* ' As we have noted, Jesus stated that He was '*the truth*'. He had told Pilate that He '*was born and came into the world to testify to the truth*' and that '*All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true*.' (John 18:37-38) He also said, '*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*' (John 17:17 NIV). So we see that true character development, sanctification, is accomplished through walking in the truth.

King David prayed, '*Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live* [i.e., walk NKJV] *according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart* ' (that is sanctification)*, so that I may honor you.*' (Ps.86:11) Psalm 119 says, '*The entirety of Your word [is] truth* ' '*Your law [is] truth*' (Vs.160,142). When, with an open heart, we spend time

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walking through the Word of God seeking for truth as for treasure, we find that it works to convict and to convince us of areas in our behaviour that we need to cooperate with God in His work of changing us into His image. This is ongoing work as Step 10 says, "Continued to take personal inventory and when were wrong promptly admitted it."

The key word is '**CONTINUED**'. This is an ongoing work, "the work of a lifetime". We are all walking a walk, but are we Walking **THE** Walk? Can we say with the psalmist, '*I have chosen the way of truth . . . I cling to your laws . . . I will run the course of Your commandments*.' (Ps 119:30 -32 NKJV, NLT, NIV)

Time for Commitment:

1. Ponder this statement - "It is in looking to Jesus and beholding his loveliness, having our eyes steadfastly fixed upon him, that we become changed into his image. He will give grace to all that keep his way, and do his will, and walk in truth. But those who love their own way, who worship their idols of opinion, and do not love God and obey his word, will continue to walk in darkness." E.G. White, **Review and Herald** Dec. 23, 1890
2. In light of what we have studied, which road are we going to commit to - the narrow way of truth and light that leads to life or the way of self-destruction?

Summary in an Acrostic

W -	**with the Way on the way**	Jesus said, '*I am the way* ' (John 14:6)
A -	**always with the Way**	'*And be sure of this: I am with you always*.' (Matt.28:20)
L -	**learn** by following the light of the world and then be that light of love.	
K -	**keep on** - never give up - '*press on to reach the end of the race.*' **knit together** - '*till we all come to the unity of the faith.*' (Eph.4:13)	

"If we are of one mind with God, our will will be swallowed up in God's will, and we shall follow wherever God leads the way. As a loving child places his hand in that of his father, and walks with him in perfect trust whether it is dark or bright, so the sons and daughters of God are to walk with Jesus through joy or sorrow." (EGW, **Conflict and Courage**, p.28)

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GROWING IN GRACE

Having chosen to walk in the light of truth as it is in Jesus, the Way, we are ready to move forward in character refinement. We have surrendered our will to the Master Craftsman to hew, square, and polish us until we reflect His likeness. In this lesson we will explore how we can co-operate with Christ in achieving the goal of sanctification - Christ's character reproduced in us. The eleventh step will help us develop a closer relationship with the only 'One' who can guide our character development.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

This step is very important because it talks about three things we need if we are going to attain to Christ-likeness. They are:

1. Conscious contact with God - that is a personal relationship with God.
2. Knowledge of His will for us - as He reveals it to us through His Word.
3. The power to do His will - to act in complete agreement with His will.

It also gives us two essential tools in meeting the three things we need. They are:

1. Prayer - conscious contact and constant communication with our creator
2. Meditation - focussed thinking on the revelations of God and His love.

Seeking through Prayer

We may ask, "What is meant by 'prayer'?" "**Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.**" (EGW, **Steps to Christ**, p.93) God is a trustworthy friend who waits patiently for us to confide in Him.

Effective prayer includes three elements, **A**sk Christ to fulfill a need, **B**elieve that He will, and **C**laim a Bible promise that is appropriate to the need. These have been called the ABC's of prayer. Let's examine the ABC's in more detail.

Ask, Jesus said, '*and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*' (Matt. 7:7 NKJV). But before we ask, we need to check our motives for asking. James, a New Testament author writes, '*And even when you ask, you don't get it because your **motives are all wrong**—you want only what will give you pleasure.*' (Jam.4:3). Jesus, in talking about asking, said that our heavenly Father longs to '*give good gifts to those who ask him* ' (Matt.7:11). We can be certain that, '*The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right*' (Ps.84:11) because, as Jesus said, "*your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!* "

Question: **What are the three good things mentioned in step 11 that we really need to ask for?**

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Believe - Jesus said, "*And whatever things you ask in prayer, **believing**, you will receive.*" (Matt 21:22 NKJV) This is a prayer of faith. The author of Hebrews wrote, '*And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him **must believe** that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*' (11:6) "Faith is trusting God--believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good." (EGW, Education, p.253) "Our part is to pray and believe. Watch unto prayer. Watch, and co-operate with the prayer-hearing God. Bear in mind that "we are labourers together with God." 1 Cor. 3:9. Speak and act in harmony with your prayers." (EGW, **Christ Object Lessons**, p.146)

Reflect: A man had a son who suffered from seizures. Some of the disciples tried to heal him but failed. When Jesus arrived on the scene the man asked if He could help his son. '*"What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"* ' (Mark 9:17-24)

'*But when [we] ask, [we] must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*' (Jam.1:6 modified to the 1st person)

Claim God's promise - When we ask for something that is a 'good thing' that God has promised - and God cannot lie (see Tit.1:2) - and we believe Him when He says, '*I will not break my covenant; I will not take back a single word I said*' (Ps.89:34), then we have confidence to claim what He has promised.

"Whatever gift He promises, is in the promise itself. "The seed is the word of God." Luke 8:11. As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in His promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift." (EGW, **Education**, p.253)

Give Gratitude for the Gift: '*Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*' (2Cor.9:15)

Discuss the gifts that are available in the following promises of God.

1. *""Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends."* (Rev.3:20)
2. '*For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."* (Heb.13:5)
3. "*And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" (John 8:32)
4. "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*" (2Tim.1:7)

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Seeking through Meditation

There are many types of meditation but the meditation we need to practise is well described in the words of God to Joshua who took on the leadership of Israel after Moses had died. God said, "*Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do."* (Jos. 1:8) This 'book' is included in the earliest books of the Bible. We see, then, that God directs His people to study and think about the teachings He has inspired.

Paul wrote these words to Timothy, '*All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*' (2Tim.3:16-17) That sounds like what we need.

So meditating involves immersing our minds in the Word of God 'day and night' so that our thoughts are ever guided by its principles. Paul puts it this way, "*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think* [meditate] *about such things."* (Phil. 4:8 NIV). In so doing we will be able to declare with David, "*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.*" (Ps 19:14)

Christian meditation is focused on knowing God and His truth as revealed in His word.

1. Knowing God is more than knowing about God. Knowing God is to be in a bonded relationship with Him. It is conscious (and constant) contact with Him. One of our specific needs.

2. Knowing the truth of God, His will, exposes our thinking and faulty character traits. '*For the word of God is alive and powerful. . . . It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*' (Heb.4:12)

3. We are drawn to the perfect character and mind of Christ - to His love, humility and obedience that took Him to the cross. There He bore the consequences of our faulty thinking and behaviour (Phil.2:5-8). The veil of our ignorance is removed, we behold His glory '*And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.*' (2Cor.3:18). When we accept His mind set, we acquire true character development and experience positive behavioural changes. We "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" (2Pet.3:18)

Contemplate Christ's Character -

'*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*' (Phil.2:5)

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Growing in Grace

Reflect on the following words of Peter as we read and then discuss them. How do they summarize what we have been studying?

> "May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.
>
> "By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.
>
> "And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.
>
> "In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge,
>
> "and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness,
>
> "and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.
>
> "The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2Pet.1:2-8)

Pray and Meditate

"Wait upon the Lord in faith. The Lord draws out the soul in prayer, and gives us to feel His precious love. We have a nearness to Him, and can hold sweet communion with Him. We obtain distinct views of His tenderness and compassion, and our hearts are broken and melted with contemplation of the love that is given to us. We feel indeed an abiding Christ in the soul. We abide in Him, and feel at home with Jesus. The promises flow into the soul. . . . We have a realizing sense of the love of God, and we rest in His love. No language can describe it, it is beyond knowledge. We are one with Christ, our life is hid with Christ in God. We have the assurance that when He who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. With strong confidence, we can call God our Father." (EGW, **Letter 52, 1894** as quoted in **3 Bible Commentary** pp.1147-8)

When we have the mind of Christ our words become Christlike.
When our words are an expression of Christ our actions become Christlike.
When we act like Christ, Christlikeness becomes a habit.
When our habits reveal Christlikeness our character reflects Christ
When we reflect Christ's character, we are one with Christ.

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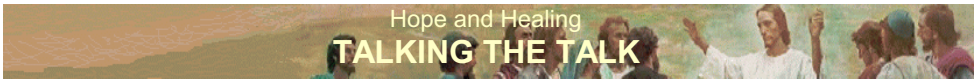

With the past irrevocably behind us, we have, through God's goodness and grace, ascended from that place of despair that held us captive to our hurts, habits, addictions, and compulsive behaviours to the safe haven of justification. We have surrendered our will and our lives over to God and asked Him to remove our shortcomings, rework our attitudes, desires and motives, and remake us after the similitude of our Saviour. We have entered into a long-term relationship with our Lord through prayer and meditation and now, with confidence seek to take the final step.

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with like problems and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This step states two essential actions that are important in maintaining and advancing our character transformation or sanctification. God cannot do these actions for us, yet without God we cannot do them by ourselves. Let's note these two actions:

1. Carry this message of hope and healing to others - There are many more out there drowning in despair. They could be family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues or strangers.
2. Practice these principles - our only safety is to remain vigilant against becoming over confident, weary or complacent.

Sharing Hope

Let's read one of Jesus' most challenging experiences - He had just calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee which we read in an earlier lesson. He and the disciples came ashore in the region of Gadara. (Mark 5:2-20)

"When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from a cemetery to meet him. This man lived among the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain.

"Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

"Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him.

"With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit."

"Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?" And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man." Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place.

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“There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them."

“So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

“The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened.

“A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid.

“Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

“As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been."

“So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.”

Discussion

1. Discuss the mental state of the Gadarene and his response to the arrival of Jesus. Which step to Hope and Healing seems most relevant in this story?
2. Discuss the crowd’s response to the events of this story. Why? Were they ready to listen?
3. Later in Mark (7:31-37) we read that Jesus revisited the region where he was welcomed and was overwhelmed with requests for healing. What brought about this change? What can we learn about the value of sharing our experience and testifying to what God had done for us?

Let’s look at another experience in Jesus’ ministry - It reveals a different response to the call to share hope and healing. We will also note some similarities with the earlier story as well as some contrasts. (Mark.10:17-22)

“As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good. But to answer your question, you know the commandments: “You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.”

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"Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."

“Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

“At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.”

Discussion

1. What similarities and contrasts can be found in these two stories?
2. What shackles blocked this young man from experiencing fullness of life?
3. Discuss how materialism can be a stumbling block to spiritual restoration and sanctification.

Consider Our Responsibility

There are people all around us who are hurting like we hurt, who have habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours similar to our experience and who feel utterly hopeless and helpless. These people need our help. There are many whose lives are filled with despair but who function behind a false facade of respectability. With Paul we can say, “So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" (2Cor.5:20) Christ is seeking such for His kingdom. Let us reflect on the following verses:

“Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.

“For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.” . . .

“I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!” (Matt.25:34-36,40)

“As food to the hungry and water to the thirsty, so is the doing of God's work to those who obey His will because they love Him. Those who are engaged in the work . . . are to give evidence that God has a message for them to bear and a work for them to do. They are to labor in the spirit of meekness, showing that they have learned in the school of Christ His lowliness of heart. Those who are ever humble and contrite carry with them the evidence that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him.” (EGW, **Manuscript Releases Vol.14**, p.143)

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Practice these Principles

Paul said, "*I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.*" (Phil.3:12)

As ambassadors of the Good News we will practice these principles in all our affairs. These principles are now a way of life. They are embodied in Christ and as we walk in the Way, as we accept His truth and live His life we become living letters to be read of all men. (Cf. 2Cor.3:2-3).

The following acrostic expresses, in summary form, the twelve step principles we have been working through. Let us read them in the first person singular.

A -	Admit Acknowledge	My powerlessness. That God has the power to restore me.
M -	Meditate and pray	So as to know God's will for me and to maintain my personal relationship with my Saviour.
B -	Believe that	God has justified me with Christ's blood; and the Holy Spirit is working to sanctify me.
A -	Ask God humbly	To create in me a clean heart and restore right attitudes, desires and motives in me.
S -	Search my heart	And let God test my intentions and know my deeper thoughts.
S -	Surrender daily	To the care of God, who has loved me with an everlasting love and has saved me by His grace.
A -	Accept responsibility	To make amends for the hurt I have caused others where to do so will not harm anyone.
D -	Decide to submit	To God's refining processes so as to restore His image in me.
O -	Offer myself	As a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.
R -	Reach out to others	With a helping hand.
S -	Seek to share	This message of hope and healing with those whose lives have become unmanageable.

Walk the Walk & Talk the Talk

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APPENDIX

Suggested Small Group Program Outline

Twelve Steps with Scripture

Twelve Steps with Promises

Twelve Steps with Thoughts

Prayer Sheet

(The following outline is a guide for a more formal group and may be more than some groups need. Select the elements relevant to your group)

HOPE AND HEALING
SMALL GROUP PROGRAM OUTLINE

Welcome, call meeting to order and introduce Guidelines:-

1. We use first names only.
2. This is a judgement free group where confidentiality is respected.
3. We are all free to share without interruption

Announce: - (see that all have Prayer time sheet)

A Moment of Silence - ½ minute of quiet reflection or personal prayer

The Serenity Prayer -

Introductions: - (First names only)

Reading the Twelve Steps: - (call on two people to read or read around the group. Rotate through 3 reading sets).

12 steps + scripture support (week 1 of cycle)

12 steps + promises (beatitudes) (week 2 of cycle)

12 steps + Thoughts (EGW) (week3 or 3 & 4 of cycle)

Lesson and discussion: -
(Try to complete each lesson in a session. If a lesson is not finished in the hour then keep it over to the following week)

Offering Collection (optional - may needed to cover printing costs)

Close with short prayer and the Lord's Prayer: -
(see Prayer Time sheets)

HOPE AND HEALING

The Twelve Steps

with Scripture

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Scripture: "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't." (Rom.7:18 NLT)

Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Scripture: "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him." (Phil. 2:13 NLT)

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Scripture: "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." (Rom.12:1 NLT)

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Scripture: "Instead, let us test and examine our ways. Let us turn back to the LORD." (Lam.3:40 NLT)

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts." (Ps.139:23 NLT)

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Scripture: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." (Jam.5:16a NLT)

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Scripture: "I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?" (Rom.7:22-24 NLT)

Continued over

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Scripture: "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor." (Jam.4:10 NLT)

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Ps.51:7 NLT)

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Scripture: "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." (1John 1:9 NLT)

". . . whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them . . ." (Matt.7:12 NLT)

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Scripture: "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God." (Matt.5:23-24 NLT)

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Scripture: "If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall." (1Cor.10:12 NLT)

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Scripture: "Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives." (Col.3:16a NLT)

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with like problems and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Scripture: "Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself." (Gal. 6:1 NLT)

HOPE AND HEALING

The Twelve Steps

with Promises

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Promise: "God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him." (Matt.5:3 NLT)

Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Promise: "God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.." (Matt.5:4NLT)

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Promise: "God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth." (Matt.5:5 NLT)

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Promise: "God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God." (Matt.5:8)

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Promise: "God blesses those who hunger and thirst for *righteousness*, for they will be satisfied." (Matt.5:6NLT alt.)

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Promise: "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." (1John 1:9 NLT)

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Promise: "God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy." (Matt.5:7 NLT)

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Promise: "God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God." (Matt.5:9 NLT)

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Promise: "God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy." "God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God." (Matt.5:7,9 NLT)

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Promise: "But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you." (Matt.6:6 NLT)

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with like problems and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Promise: "God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." (Matt.5:10 NLT)

HOPE AND HEALING

The Twelve Steps

with a thought from E.G. White's writings

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over our hurts, habits, addictions and compulsive behaviours, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Thought: The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen.

(**Acts of the Apostles** p.561)

Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Thought: Man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change may be affected. The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only by the Holy Spirit. He who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power. (**In Heavenly Places**, p.20)

Step 3: Made a decision to turn our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Thought: Every day of our lives we should surrender ourselves to God. Thus we may gain special help and daily victories. The cross is to be borne daily. Every word should be guarded, for we are responsible to God to represent in our lives as far as possible the character of Christ.

(**Child Guidance**, p.483)

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Thought: What we want at the present time is to examine our own hearts, to discover if there is anything in them that is not right before God.

(**The Importance of Trust in God, Review and Herald**, May 10, 1887)

Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Thought: Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. (**The Faith I Live By**, p.128)

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Thought: Those who accept Christ as their Saviour have promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. In surrendering ourselves to God to be molded and trained by Him, we reap great advantages; for we have weaknesses of character, and we unite ourselves to One who is able to remove these defects. (**The Bible Echo**, January 29, 1894)

Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Thought: If the deceptive covering which is about us could be removed so that we could see ourselves as God sees us, we would no longer seek to justify self but would fall all broken upon Christ, the only One who can remove the defects in our characters.

(Adapted from **Mind, Character and Personality Vol. 2**)

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Thought: We must brush out the corners with the dust-brush. We must not hide our evils. Of course we should not expose evils to the public that are matters to be confessed to God alone. But while it is a disgrace to sin, it is no disgrace to confess sins. (**Review Herald**, March 12, 1889)

Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Thought: It is not . . . too late for wrongs to be righted. Show your repentance for past wrongs by redeeming the time. Where you have wronged anyone, make restitution as it comes to your mind. (**3 Testimonies**, 550-551)

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Thought: The wisdom which God gives will lead men to self-examination. The truth will convict them of their errors and existing wrongs. The heart must be open to see, realize, and acknowledge these wrongs, and then, through the help of Jesus, each must earnestly engage in the work of overcoming them.

(4 Testimonies, 361)

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Thought: The only safety for the human agent who is striving for an immortal crown is to live in hourly contact, in conscious, loving communion with the highest principles God has set forth in His word. Truth and righteousness must be inscribed upon every action done for our fellow men. Mercy must constantly flow forth from the soul, revealing an abiding Christ. Sanctified judgment and purified reasoning will give strength and solidity and spiritual power. Then every cause that asks for our sympathy and co-operation will receive careful consideration. (**Bible Training School - The Word of God**)

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others with like problems and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Thought: As food to the hungry and water to the thirsty, so is the doing of God's work to those who obey His will because they love Him. Those who are engaged in the work of the ministry are to give evidence that God has a message for them to bear and a work for them to do. They are to labor in the spirit of meekness, showing that they have learned in the school of Christ His lowliness of heart. Those who are ever humble and contrite carry with them the evidence that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him.

(**Manuscript Releases Vol.14**, p.143)

Prayer Time

A Moment of Silence

Followed by

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I
Cannot change,
The courage to change
the things I can
And the wisdom to know
The difference.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.

May your Kingdom come soon.

May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need,

and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

Amen.